

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 70, No. 11

September 2000

ANGER

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1958.]

THE *Vishnu Purana* is said to be "equal in sanctity to the Vedas." In response to his pupil Maitreya, Parasara tells the tale of all evolution. It is a great work, and H.P.B. makes use of it to explain deep esoteric teachings.

Parasara is the son of Saktri or Sakti, and the grandson of the holy sage Vasishtha. In the *Adi Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, the story of the birth of Parasara is given. King Kalmashapara, meeting with Sakti, the son of Vasishtha, in a narrow path in a thicket, desired him to stand out of his way. The sage refused, on which the Raja beat him with his whip; Sakti cursed him to become a *Rakshasa*, a man-devouring spirit. So the Raja having become a *Rakshasa*, killed and devoured not only Sakti but his brothers also. But at the time of his death Sakti's wife was an expectant mother; Parasara was her son and was brought up by his grandfather Vasishtha. The son came to know of the manner of his father's and his uncles' death; so he instituted a sacrifice for the destruction of all *Rakshasas*. Thereupon the great sage spoke to his grandson:

Enough, my boy. Let thy wrath be appeased. The *Rakshasas* are not culpable; thy father's death was the work of Karma. Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man. By whom, it may be asked, is anyone killed? Every man reaps the consequences of his own acts. Anger, my son, is the destruction

of all that man obtains, by arduous exertions, of fame and of devout austerities, and prevents the attainment of heaven or of emancipation. The chief sages always shun wrath: be not thou, my child, subject to its influence. Let no more of these unoffending spirits of darkness be consumed. Mercy is the might of the righteous.

Self-evident is the truth of these noble words of the holy sage. The *Purana* records the gift bestowed by the high gods on Parasara because of his non-violent act: "You have exercised clemency; therefore you shall become learned in every science."

Anger is named as one of the three gates of hell (*Gita*, XVI, 21). An angry man lives in hell or *kama-loka* in waking life. A mad man does not recognize his lunacy, nor does an angry man remember the saying of Horace: "Anger is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you."

There are men who suffer from irritation born of impatience or discontent, and these soon gain strength and turn into wrath. The ultimate effect is that such a person becomes one of those who, in the words of Shakespeare, "carries anger as the flint bears fire." Then there are those who feel indignation (and some salve their consciences by naming it "righteous indignation") but refrain from expressing it in words. The Christian scriptures have a telling proverb: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?"

The world is full of the force of violence, and anger is a pronounced and formidable expression of it. There is anger hotly expressed by words and with fists and kicks. There is cold anger, like hard ice, which burns. From its expression in slight displeasure which is merely shown by the face, to the extreme variety which produces apoplexy—the human kingdom suffers from anger. For all such Gandhiji's precept and example are excellent. He says:

It is not that I do not get angry. I do not give vent to anger. I cultivate the quality of patience as angerlessness, and generally speaking I succeed. How I find it possible to control it would be a useless question, for it is a habit that everyone must cultivate and must succeed in forming by constant practice.

If wrath is bad for the ordinary mortal, it is one of the greatest of hindrances for him who attempts to live the higher life. The violent breaking up caused by anger in a practising neophyte is spoken of by W. Q. Judge in his "Culture of Concentration" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*, pp. 11-12). He concludes: "...anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love—absolute toleration—are cultivated."

Those who study that article carefully and attentively will naturally wish to know what is the force and the substance of anger. Force or energy is a quality; but every quality must belong to something, or a somebody," says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 509). To say that it is disorderly motion, tending towards inertia, hardness, darkness and *tamas*; or that the nature spirits or elementals act as the agents who arouse our anger, is not an adequate explanation. The force of anger belongs to the dark side of Nature and emanates from the mysterious source symbolized as Mara, Ahriman, Devil. The dark intelligence pervasive in material Nature or *Prakriti* colours the Kama principle in man, and something of this dark intelligence and its progeny can be understood if we brood over these words of *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 260):

It is not molecularly constituted matter—least of all the human body (*sthulasarira*)—that is the grossest of all our "principles," but verily the *middle* principle, the real animal centre; whereas our body is but its shell, the irresponsible factor and medium through which the beast in us acts all its life. Every intellectual theosophist will understand my real meaning.

But all this is not as graphic as the words of Mr. Judge who refers to the progressing neophyte: "...you may soon begin to get the attention of the Black Magicians, who then begin to try to knock you out, so beware." How is this knocking out done? "Attempts will be silently made to arouse irritation and to increase it where it now exists" (*Letters That Have Helped Me*). Again, "No, irritation should be let dwell inside. It is a deadly foe. Sit on all the small occasions that evoke it and the greater ones will never arise to trouble you." (*Ibid.*)

Irritation springs from impatience and grows into anger. The root and the remedy are revealed by Mr. Judge. The statements quoted above should provoke thought in every earnest student-server.

The Mahatma K.H. has written: "It is a meritorious act to extirpate with the roots all feelings of anger, so as to never feel the slightest paroxysm of a passion we all consider sinful." Here anger is designated as a sin, and in the Science of Occultism sin is a step to soul-less-ness. In that strange story *Vathek*, by the highly eccentric William Beckford, occurs a statement about the sin of anger. *Vathek* is an Oriental story of a megalomaniac, an Arabian Caliph, who sells himself to Eblis, Satan. From crime to worse crime he moves; the tragic end of his burning heart we will not speak about. But at the very beginning of the story occurs this:

When he was angry, one of his eyes became so terrible that no person would bear to behold it; and the wretch upon whom it was fixed instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions, and making his palace desolate, he but rarely gave way to his anger.

The Old Testament wisdom should be remembered: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

Better that we close this outline study of anger with a reference to the patient, spiritual eyes which bring peace and enlightenment. Says the pupil to his Guru:

Master, obeisance to thee. Save me sunk in the sea of life, bending on me thy steadfast glance, which rains down righteousness and compassion.

All the world's possibilities in man
Are waiting as the tree waits in its seed.

—SRI AUROBINDO

SOUL—THE SPARK OF LIFE

THE STORY OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

THE soul who is man, grows and evolves through a triple process—through happiness, through progress, through service. Any of these roads, walked separately, brings frustration. Unless we perceive the place of pain, we are unable to fathom the mystery of happiness; unless we vision with some knowledge the progress of the entire human race, our own growth gets frustrated. Inspiration to do the right and to combat the daily evils of life, our own as of all those around, comes from within the human soul. The soul grows through service into happiness, and through happiness into service. The spark of life we call Man, the Thinker, radiates light, radiates joy, radiates in self-growth for the helping of all.

What is the nature of the human soul—this spark of *Manas*, the Thinker, with his power of ideation, of choice, of sacrifice? The human soul, *Manas*, or *Manushya*, must not be confounded with mind. Mind is not man; mind is the vehicle in which man descends to earth, ascends to heaven; mind is the vessel in which man, the soul, navigates the Ocean of Life, sometimes very stormy. Many are the wrecks, and sometimes the boat and the navigator, the mind and the incarnated soul, come to grief. Krishna says in the *Gita* that in the bark of spiritual knowledge, and in that alone, man is safe. Spiritual wisdom is the ship that never gets wrecked, that never goes down. In it the navigator may, nay, does, experience storms, but the vessel is seaworthy, and the man will reach the haven of enlightenment in and through it. It is a wonderful image—the bark of spiritual knowledge. For who has not experienced the sea of life—its calmness and happiness, and then its stormy waves that dash the very rocks to pieces; who has not experienced the ebbing away of the power of life, and then the inflow of joy that tides in, bringing the shells of beauty and perchance one that hides the pearl of great price? But the navigator in the ship of wisdom knows how to manage rough seas and steer into the centre of the Self where calm ever abides; and he also knows how to enjoy good weather.

So let us always remember that image—man is the navigator, but he must acquire the vehicle, the ship of wisdom; none other will do.

So man is not mind; man is the soul and uses the mind. *Manas*, *Manushya*, is a concept that is not yet understood by modern philosophy, much less by modern psychology. In Indian philosophy, in Asiatic psychology, the accurate teaching is to be found. In our study of human evolution, we must begin by discarding the wrong view that mind is the product of the brain and the nervous system, as also that mind is soul, and soul is mind. Theosophy, the Wisdom-Religion of the ancient world, emphasizes the psychological and philosophical fact of the difference between soul, mind and body as a fundamental proposition.

The ancient teaching is that man has two aspects—manifested and unmanifested, incarnate and transcendent. There is the embodied soul and the overbrooding soul. There is now and here in our body an entity that speaks of itself as "I am I" and no other. That entity uses the body, the limbs of the body, the senses and organs of the body. That entity, which also uses the mind to think with, is the incarnated soul, the embodied soul. The *Gita* speaks of it as the *Dehi*, he who is in the body. But overbrooding that embodied soul is another, the non-incarnated aspect of man. Yet that transcendent aspect is not separate from the incarnated aspect. The two are closely knit, in intimate embrace, and are really one.

This teaching is given in Chapter XIII of the *Gita* and also elsewhere. Arjuna is called *Nara*, Man, and Krishna is *Narayana*. One is the embodied or incarnated soul, the other the overbrooding transcendent soul. But in narrating his wonderful *Vibhutis* or divine manifestations, Krishna says: "Of the Pandavas I am Arjuna," or *Nara*. Each man, each woman, is both Krishna and Arjuna, *Narayana* and *Nara*. Each has two aspects—embodied and transcendent. The incarnated soul suffers and enjoys, has limitations, and errs, blunders, suffers and learns. But the other, the transcendent soul, is pure, unaffected by pleasures and pains; he is the Genius in man, the Hero in man, whose influence is not felt nor recognized by most people. This is a practical point and once we get a clear idea of this psychological fundamental, our problems will be viewed differently

Let us understand first this dual aspect of higher and lower man—embodied and transcendent. Employing the old method, let us begin with universals and come down to particulars. The title of this article, "Soul—the Spark of Life," is derived from the *Mundaka Upanishad*, which says: "As from a blazing fire arise a thousand sparks, so from the Imperishable many beings stream forth." Each one of us is a spark of Life; each one of us has issued forth from a blazing Fire, a fount of Light. It is necessary, at the very start, to note the philosophical and metaphysical basis of unity and brotherhood. Solidarity of man is rooted in and founded upon the common source of separated lives. From One Fire innumerable sparks; from One Life, innumerable lives; from One Self, innumerable selves.

The nature of the spark or the soul is identical with the nature of the Fire, the One Self, the One Life, the One Spirit. From a single spark a whole new Universe of Fire can arise. In essence and in substance, both as spirit and as matter, the human soul is identical with the Universal Self. The Self exists, and it exists ever in Ideation and Joy. So also the human soul ever exists in the Bliss of Creative Thought. The Self of the Universe and the Self of man are the same. Man is like an equilateral triangle: the human Spirit is the apex of the triangle and from it two lines issue forth: one the line of Ideation, the other the line of Joy. Through these two, growth is achieved and happiness is experienced; but not until the base of the triangle, which is altruism and service, is drawn. Two lines from an apex or point do not form a complete figure, and the triangle is the first complete figure.

Consider this: the Universal Self is described as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. *Sat* is existence; it is the point, the apex from which come the two lines: one is *Chit*-Ideation; the other is *Ananda*-bliss. But this one point, *Sat*, at the dawn of manifestation, multiplies itself and so there are innumerable points with two lines. These are called Duads, Eternal Pilgrims; but two in one and therefore more generally known as Monads—not human Monads, but only Monads, and more exactly, Divine Monads. These Eternal Pilgrims are *Atma-Buddhis*, and there is intelligence or ideation and creative joy inhering in each. There is also intelligence, creativeness and bliss

in the Monadic Essence made up of potential Monads—in the crystal and the rose, in the bird and the beast. There is not yet self-consciousness: minerals, vegetables and animals are entities; they exist, but they know not that they exist; there is intelligence and ideation, but they know not what intelligence or ideation is; there is bliss of life, but they know not what bliss is—the how and why of it. In their existence, in their life-process and evolution, there is happiness and there is growth by natural impulse; there is no free-will, no sense of choice, no speech of words, nor good and evil as we know all these in the human kingdom.

Coming to man, we find that the base of the triangle connecting ideation to bliss, *Chit to Ananda*, is formed. Man is not just existent, like other beings in nature; he *knows* that he exists. All non-human beings have consciousness of which they know nothing; *i.e.*, they are not even aware of their own existence; but human beings know and are aware of their existence, *i.e.*, they are self-conscious. Therefore the human Monad is not a duad, it is a triad; it is *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. And this connection, this line that makes the triangle complete, brings us the knowledge of good and evil, the power to enjoy and to suffer, the faculty to speak and to be understood; above all the capacity to choose and thus guide our own life-process, our own evolution. Non-human entities may be described as mechanistic, but men as engineers who run the whole machinery of the universe. Therefore unless man uses all three aspects of his own being and nature, he suffers. Seeking happiness, he meets frustration, and through pain he evolves. Also mere desire to grow brings its own frustration, and altruistic service raising the tone of the whole of the society and the race is necessary.

The spark of life that we call man is triple, and his progress is along a triple line. Spiritual life comprises not just meditation by which soul-growth takes place and in which the aspect of *Chit* or ideation is emphasized. Nor is spiritual life the experiencing of bliss, by one process or another, and thus activating the *Ananda* aspect. Frustration is bound to result unless the three are joined together. Beware therefore of any school of mystic or occult training where the three are not taught together; where knowledge

and devotion are not merged in the service of the race.

The incarnate and transcendent souls are not two separate entities in us; they are in reality one—two aspects of one and the same entity. Likewise, to say that secular or ordinary life is different from the spiritual or higher life is a blunder. Nothing that we feel and think, say or do, should be put into compartments—one labelled spiritual, the other secular. If our morning meditation does not tangibly and substantially affect our words and deeds, at home, in the office, in the club and elsewhere, then the meditation is fruitless. Compartmental life is the destroyer of spiritual life.

What are the expressions of compartmental life? (1) Seeking of happiness without the desire for spiritual progress is one form of compartmental life. People who live the sense-life, or the mind-life, or even what is called the good life, seeking happiness for themselves, are not spiritual. They find frustration as time rolls by. (2) Seeking knowledge and growth, without feeling the peace of wisdom, is another form of compartmental life. Many men of learning as also those who follow false practices find frustration in the whirligig of time. (3) Seeking both peace and knowledge, but regardless of the fate of society, of the race, of the universe to which we belong, is still another form of compartmental life. Many people here in India, seeking salvation, have taken that way and often their system and method is mistaken for *Raja Yoga*. It is not so. If one studies the *Gita* and the *Upanishads* carefully, one will learn that *Raja-Yoga* is not emancipation from life, but service in and of life.

In these three types of compartmental life a wrong way has been adopted. The paths of knowledge, of action, of practice, of devotion and so forth are not separate and distinct. Such divisions perpetuate the idea of division in man, and he fails to realize his wholeness. So we need knowledge which brings power, devotion which brings peace and happiness, and acts of service which bring us in contact with our fellowmen and develop in us through such contact the idea of brotherhood.

So as our goal is to become whole on this plane of matter—as we actually are on the plane of Spirit—we must develop from within ourselves our highest aspects. What is the method? The word *Yoga*

is often used. But what is Yoga? It is union of the lower and the higher selves, of the incarnated and the transcendent selves, of the *Dehi* and the *Ishvara*, *Nara* and *Narayana*, Arjuna and Krishna. But *Raja-Yoga*, the science that is kingly and the art that makes each practitioner a king, is not understood. As a spiritual entity, each one of us is divine, is royal, is *Ishvara*; but it is here, in this house of flesh, that we have to realize our divine royalty, our royal divinity. Yoga is *not* going away from the body; it is coming down *into* the body. Emancipation does not mean emancipation of the soul from the body; it means emancipating the body; raising it to the level of the spiritual divinity. So the union-yoga must be performed *in* the body. The transcendent self must descend and incarnate fully—that is the stage of Buddhahood. The great Buddha reached enlightenment and the light shone in and through his body.

Now comes the question of method, of the practice of yoga. If we want to become one self-conscious whole, if we want to unite self-consciously this petty incarnated soul with the *Raja*, the King, who is the Transcendent Soul, then no part of our being, no aspect of our life, can be overlooked. Each day and each part of the day, every and all events of life, each and every constituent of our being—mind and heart, speech and actions, hands and feet, senses and organs—all, all must be pressed into the service of the Great Enterprise. What results are expected of us? That we shall be continuously evolving and growing and learning; that we shall serve all beings as part of ourselves. Day by day, hour by hour, in the small plain duties of life, in earning our livelihood, in the struggles of existence, we shall keep before us these three mighty concepts: (1) Peace through detachment (*Vairagya*); (2) Knowledge through examination (*Abhyasa*); (3) Service through attachment (*Yoga*, Union).

These three comprise the whole method. Peace only comes through detachment. Knowledge is acquired by examining through study and practice. Service alone produces real Yoga—Attachment. Krishna, the Great Avatara, is the perfect Yogi, because he manifested the power of complete Yoga. He was one with the whole of the Universe. His Light and Fire are in the heart of every

man, woman and child. The radiance of Krishna, the Nur of Allah, the Light of Christos and of Ahura Mazda, is in the heart of each and every one.

So Yoga—Attachment to the Universe—that is the goal. This whole universe is saturated with the power of Krishna, with the Light of Allah and of Christ, with the warmth of Ahura Mazda, and people do not feel it because they look for it only in the temple and the mosque and the church. Let us look for the great Presence within us and then we shall find it around us. Within us is the spark of Life and it is growing into Perfect Divinity. As we fill the world around us with the presence of its radiation in Peace, with Knowledge, by Service, we shall feel the great Presence of the Mighty Ones. May that Presence bless us all with the Peace born of Detachment, Knowledge born of Examination, Service born of Attachment—Yoga, Supreme Union.

A BRANCH cut off from its neighbour branch cannot but be cut off from the whole plant. In the very same way a man severed from one man has fallen away from the fellowship of all men. Now a branch is cut off by others, but a man separates himself from his neighbour by his own agency in hating him or turning his back upon him; and is unaware that he has thereby sundered himself from the whole civic community.

—MARCUS AURELIUS

THE PSYCHIC AND THE SPIRITUAL

THEOSOPHY recognizes the existence in every human being of latent powers—powers that are now latent but that will unfold in the course of evolution. These powers are psychic and spiritual—two different sets of powers belonging to two different aspects of the human constitution. Just as in man there are these two aspects, so in nature we have two entirely different realms: the psychic and the spiritual. Both belong to the invisible, occult side of nature, and therefore are hidden from physical view; they are not perceptible to the naked eye. Within and behind every visible form, exists the invisible animating principle, without which the gross physical would not be there; and that is the psychic aspect. But within and behind that invisible aspect lies another realm, that of the divine Spirit, that of the changeless, eternal principle of divine Life. This is so also in man, who too has a psychic and a spiritual nature.

One of the objects of the Theosophical Movement founded by H. P. Blavatsky was to reawaken in the memory of the race the recognition of the reality of the inner and invisible side of both nature and of man. Both modern science and modern theology find themselves incapable of approaching the subject of the psychic and the spiritual along reasonable lines. The limitation of science is that it will not recognize the existence of the invisible. On the other hand, religion does recognize the invisible, but it does not perceive that that invisible must be ruled by law. Between these two currents, there is the Theosophical view on the subject which gives a rational explanation of things.

People want to develop these invisible powers without understanding that psychic powers are the lower set of powers and can prove very dangerous. The spiritual or higher powers are beneficent, not only to their possessor but to the whole of humanity. They are the result of persistent efforts in moral discipline and in spiritual striving. The psychic man need not be a moral man. In fact, psychism itself, artificially or abnormally developed, is a disease and a corrupting influence, and psychics and mediums lose their moral perception and find themselves gradually becoming less and

less sensitive to the dictates of their inner conscience. As for a spiritual person, he has wisdom, compassion and purity. That is why spiritual powers can only be unfolded through a life of self-purification. Unselfishness and a deep concern for the welfare of others are very necessary for the acquisition of spiritual powers and ultimately they bring us to the position of a Buddha or a Christ.

The Buddhas and the Christs of the race, in whom the Spirit has become manifest, do have extraordinary powers over space, time, mind and matter; but it is not these powers that make them great. The spiritual Gurus are great because of their moral elevation and because of their virtue, and not because they have these powers. That which has enabled the unfoldment of these powers in a Mahatma is the degree of spiritual elevation to which he has reached. Nothing was done to cultivate these powers as such. They are not ends in themselves. When they flower naturally because the life necessary has been led, they bring gifts that are truly spiritual gifts, and that will never be misused by the one who possesses those higher spiritual powers.

The psychic and the spiritual are not something far away from us, but are right here within each one of us, although in most human beings they are only partially developed. We receive influences from both these natures. To take a few examples: Dreams are a psychic manifestation. Moods and impulses arising from desire and anger are also psychic manifestations. So the psychic nature shows itself in the average person in a variety of ways. So too with the spiritual nature. Our aspirations and higher yearnings, our desire to help our fellow men, our devotion and gratitude towards the great spiritually perfected beings, are all proofs that there is within us a depth that is higher and nobler than we can even conceive of, surrounded as we are by our own personal life.

We have to control our desires and passions, cleanse our mind and purify our motive before we can acquire occult powers. A pure motive is an unselfish motive. Unless we are unselfish enough, there will always be the temptation to misuse the powers. Modern psychologists are recognizing that the greatest danger facing humanity today is not nuclear weapons but the perverse human

mind. Bombs can kill the physical bodies of men and bring destruction to cities, but they cannot touch the soul. But the misuse of psychic and occult powers can do incalculable harm to the soul. The remedy is to inculcate a right code of ethics, to show humanity the need for self-purification and for right thinking, for thoughts are more dynamic than words or actions.

Some of the abnormal powers can be enumerated as: (1) clairvoyance, or the divine eye which enables us not only to see everything, even that which is invisible, but to understand what we see; (2) clairaudience, the celestial ear that will enable us to understand every sound that is heard; (3) the power to assume any form at will; (4) the memory of all previous stages, of oneself and of others; (5) an intuitive perception that gives us an understanding of the motives and the thoughts of others; and the summation of these *siddhis* or powers is (6) the recognition of the goal of life, the distinction between the permanent and the impermanent, and a clear perception as to why we are here and why we have to strive and exert and encounter so many difficulties.

All these divine powers lie latent in the consciousness of every one of us, and it is not only possible but it is necessary that we unfold them by living the necessary life, because we owe it to our own Higher Self, to our fellow beings and to those Great Ones who are the teachers, the guides and the servants of our human family.

The psychiatrists may have outstripped the followers of other scientific disciplines in conceding the existence of a psychic realm in addition to the physical world. They have, however, not even glimpsed the possibility of truly spiritual vision or the "glories untold" which lie, "bathed in the sunlight of the Spirit...unseen by any save the eye of Soul."

If modern psychiatrists and psychologists would but take the help of ancient Indian psychology, as restated in modern Theosophy, they could advance far more rapidly in the right direction. Even knowledge of the constitution of sevenfold man and of the four states of consciousness should take them far towards truly scientific understanding.

THE RIGHT ENDEAVOUR

Unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE author of *Light on the Path* says that the teachings given in that book are written in an astral cipher and can therefore be deciphered only by the one who has acquired the faculty to read astrally. It is further said that the teachings so set out are chiefly directed towards the cultivation and development of the astral life. An earlier paragraph explains that the word "astral" means "starry"; and that though that is not a very happy term to use, it refers to that light which inheres in all material shapes and forms, lighting and animating them from within. Until this inner world of light is discovered, the swift knowledge which is intuition is impossible to us.

For the discovery of this inner world of light, the study of metaphysics becomes essential. Perfection and prescience are not the fruits of half-truths, fancies and sophistries. The basic teachings of metaphysics which deal with the history of knowledge and with its tenets on universal unity and causation, the constitution and pedigree of man and the laws of karma and reincarnation have to be understood. The forces and powers latent in man have to be studied and their origins traced; and until the tyro in occultism acknowledges that such powers are attainable by him, he will invariably fail. In the mind and the brain thus made ready by study have to be planted the saplings of ethics. Metaphysical truths have now to be given life and force and movement by making them stir and come alive in the daily actions of the probationer. It is the practice of the higher ethics which opens the eyes of the Soul to the inner world of light. As long as the individual remains in the iron grip of ignorance and illusion, so long will he incapacitate himself from perceiving his immortality. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "Shun ignorance, and likewise shun

illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the 'Eternal Man'; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha." For some constitutions, the shunning of ignorance is perhaps the most difficult exercise at the early stages of endeavour.

It will be readily perceptible that both ignorance and illusion set up vibrations that must inevitably be antagonistic to or repellent of the truth. Since in his inner nature man is immortal and therefore of the nature of truth, the incarnated man by his moorings in untruth alienates himself from the inner light which is himself. He thus sets up an inner conflict which renders him incapable of progress. This alienation from the inner light spread over long incarnations makes him prone all too often to deny its presence and ridicule its force. Grown to manhood's prime, he finds himself still enamoured of the toys of his infancy, and continues to hug them to his breast. He fails through ignorance to realize that he cannot force himself back into the state of moral irresponsibility of the animal and the babe. His persistence in ignorance and illusion and his consequent imbalance in ethical behaviour must produce karmic results which are unpleasant and sometimes catastrophic.

In her *Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky emphasizes that the first thing to learn is a true conception of the relation of the body or the physical sheath to the inner, the true man. Once the mutual interaction between these two aspects of human nature is grasped, the student will become imbued with the supreme importance of the inner man over the outer case or body. A study consistently undertaken along these lines will show that the practices undertaken by some Indian fakirs and jungle ascetics, such as those of cutting, burning and lacerating their bodies, are simply tortures that are self-inflicted for a selfish end, namely, the development of will power. The motive being selfish, the exercise becomes perfectly useless for the purpose of assisting spiritual development.

Once that a grounding in the philosophy has been attained, the difficult task that brings the student to the threshold of the occult world is to be undertaken. The first step in this endeavour is the

obtaining of the astral (spiritual) sense of sight. The inner vision, which enables him to see with the spiritual eye only, comes when the sights which the physical eyes present lose their power to arouse any passion, desire or emotion in him. And it is not only the physical sight that has to be made subservient to the person. As *Light on the Path* puts it, the eyes must be incapable of tears. Any message, be it that of pleasure or pain, that the eyes may bring has to be rendered innocuous and powerless to shake him from his fixed purpose. So, too, for internal images cast up before the mind's eye by memory, association of ideas or the influences that emanations of men and places bring to bear upon one as yet unaware of their presence or power or pull. "Thy strength is in thy Soul, and thy Soul's strength is in the calm and not in the storm revealed," said one versed in Wisdom. For the Soul to awake and act, one must provide within oneself a spot where equilibrium is maintained throughout. This condition has to be maintained through all circumstances. The pleasurable or the painful event—intense or otherwise—may be encountered in all serenity and evaluated as dispassionately as any other residuum in the crucible of life. This exercise forces upon the mind the fact that life with all its flowers and thorns and weeds is a serious business which has to be approached in all sobriety. Levity and laxness have no place here, nor are there periods when the student can relax his vigilance. The inner man of light is always awake and the Soul which leads a captive existence during earth-life has to copy *in actu* the example of its Father whom yet it does not see but whose presence he can feel and sometimes assimilate.

Grief, sorrow, surprise, shame, fear and anger are some of the emotions which with those of glee, mirth, satisfaction and excitement produce commotions and vibrations that have the power to drown knowledge in sensation. It is through emotion that the hold of the Soul on the Spirit is loosened. When that happens, perception is darkened and though the light of Spirit continues to shine, the Soul cannot benefit by it because of the fact that it has put on a sheath which is impermeable to the light from above. When darkness descends upon the nether Soul it brings with it loss of all memory

of the highest. In such condition, the Soul yearns for any experience—even that of pain—and finding it, it escapes, howsoever temporarily, from its imagined horror of an empty void—a dark nothingness which, according to his beclouded understanding, must envelop him if he is to abjure for ever all human emotions.

The novice is under the disability of not being able to see farther than such portions of the physical universe to which he may be accustomed. He understands that beyond the dimensions of his earthly consciousness there exists a plane where desires do not enter, where calmness reigns supreme and where consciousness opens on to the universal. He knows this, but has not experienced it. If emotions are to be given up, if personal desires have to be surrendered, then the aspirant finds that he is left to face a negation of all that he has erstwhile possessed or cherished. In such condition, he becomes as vulnerable to outside onslaughts as a little child, for by the rules of his discipline is he denied all weapons of offence or defence. It is in such isolation that the student is asked to find his Soul's strength and use it.

Yet, this is only the beginning. The sensitiveness of the ears has to be overcome. The onrush of waves upon waves of emotion that are produced by the noises that pour in through the ears have to be made powerless to disturb the Soul. Criticism that wounds and lacerates personal vanity, the biting taunt, the foul slander that dirties and soils, the loud abuse and the unjust accusation as also the derisive laughter, must all be met and firmly denied entrance into that inner place of peace which the disciple has established through pain and the destruction of pain. The attaining of mastery over outer sights and outer sounds has to be followed up by conquest over the reactions produced by internal images and sounds—the thought-produced progeny which are but the internal and subtle aspects of their outer stimuli.

Along with this training which is directed towards a control of one's reactions to outside influences, there must now be undertaken the control of speech. The tongue must have lost its power to wound. The excuse of righteous anger has no place here. The quick

repartee and the ironic banter so beloved of the man of the world has to be given up, its memory effaced. The presence of any of these in however latent a form would be unworthy of discipleship. Their expression in any form renders meaningless the disciple's protestations of a brotherhood *in actu*.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Thou hast to reach that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within. Thus purified, the shrine must of all action, sound, or earthly light be void; e'en as the butterfly, o'ertaken by the frost, falls lifeless at the threshold—so must all earthly thoughts fall dead before the fane.

IMPORTANT

HAVE you renewed your subscription for the next volume (Volume 71) of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, commencing in November 2000?

If not, may we have the necessary remittance soon?

The rates are:

	Annual Subscription	Single Copy
India	Rs. 30.00	Rs.3.00
Sterling area	£4.00	£0.40p
Dollar area	U.S.\$12.00	\$1.20

It is hoped that subscribers and sympathizers will renew their subscriptions at their earliest convenience. The remittances should be sent to Theosophy Company (India) Private Ltd., 40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai (Bombay) 400 020. Cheques on banks outside Mumbai should carry an addition of Rs.5.00, 50p, or 50 cents for bank charges.

Readers who find THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT helpful are requested to send in the names and addresses of friends who are likely to be interested in the magazine. Sample copies will be sent without charge.

THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

ALL existence produces sorrow and suffering; this is a fundamental tenet of Lord Buddha's Philosophy. Desire and selfish thought are the cause of sorrow, the Great Ones have taught. The Buddha's teaching on the cause of pain is well known; it might be summed up thus: Desire is the cause of existence; desire is want; want is suffering. So simple, so evident! When has anyone ceased desiring completely and continued to exist?

That selfish thought is the cause of sorrow is evident; and all selfish thought has its root in desire. Selfish thought is peculiar to the human kingdom, while desire is universal and is present in rudimentary form in all beings.

All should be interested in reducing the incidence of pain. Since pain and suffering are caused by thought, all should be interested in devising ways and means of recognizing the presence of a selfish thought; this recognition, in some instances, would decide the manner in which the ensuing act would express itself. In fact, such recognition, if properly acted upon, might even mitigate many undesirable effects. This is possible because thought is an energy which can be directed in different ways, depending upon the intent and understanding of the creator of the thought.

While the recognition, control and eventual elimination of selfish thought should be a desirable practice for all persons, it is a *must* for the serious student; it is the first as well as the continuing problem for the latter. This enterprise has to be undertaken not for one's gratification, but to enable one to become a reliable and effective co-worker with Nature. The investigation of one's personal thought reactions is an important field of experiment. One must acquire considerable experience through experimentation before one is able to be of much assistance to others.

One can understand that the Teachers presented Theosophy to the world to a great extent in terms of Fundamentals. It is quite necessary to make strenuous efforts to apply these Fundamentals in daily living. Daily life constitutes the "laboratory" for the committed student, the objective being to apply the Teachings in all directions.

The starting and continuing endeavour would seem to be experiment and close observation of the various mental functions. This requires study and an attempt to convert the results of the study into assimilated knowledge. The "laboratory" will provide ample opportunities and "case studies" in the area of immediate interest to oneself. Almost without exception we shall be called upon to understand, experiment with and modify the generally uncontrolled ebullitions of *Kama-Manas*. Only such procedure will bring us knowledge as distinguished from information.

The life of the serious student of Theosophy, then, necessitates, primarily, an attempt to apply the relevant Fundamentals to the mental plane. Next, a serious effort must be made to modify or change *Kama-Manas* to conform with the dictates of reason based upon the student's knowledge concerning the function of the various "principles" of man. Thus one becomes fit, "by study and otherwise," to become an important link in the Work of the Elder Brothers who are responsible for helping mankind, especially during these days of *Kali Yuga*.

The problem of the cause of suffering and of the means of effecting its cessation is, therefore, of the greatest importance to all people. Pain, physical, emotional, mental, interrupts or obstructs the accomplishment of our objectives in all fields of activity. Ordinarily we manage to dull our awareness of this impediment by our constant round of activities and divertive tactics of one kind or another. These we continue to employ to the extent of our capacity, that is, to the degree we can tolerate suffering. But close observation of our moods and feeling tones will demonstrate the presence of these impediments at some level of our consciousness at all times.

If we are inefficient, we usually strive to correct our shortcoming with higher efficiency. Very often in trying to become "perfectionists" we fall into one of the awful afflictions of modern society, which demands constant change, if only for the sake of change. "Improve the package, never mind the contents," is rapidly becoming a world-wide policy. Surely there is no excuse for inefficiency, but let us learn to find the "happy medium," the Buddha's "Middle Way."

Maybe we cannot attain complete equilibrium; individuals can, however, attain a state of balance with controlled tolerance, which eventually will bring the peace "which passeth all understanding." Meanwhile we need much understanding, information and the ability to apply these unremittingly. "Desire, in a limited way, with regard to the personality is the cause of all sin, sorrow and suffering," says Robert Crosbie. The problem is certainly clear enough. The cause of suffering is selfish thought; so the remedy for suffering is unselfish thinking. The question arises: How does it happen that, though all people wish to avoid suffering and can do so by thinking unselfishly, yet everyone seems to continue to suffer? Do we enjoy selfish thinking more than we dread suffering?

This may be one reason why we are not always equal to the demands of the task involved here. Over the centuries, we have established deep grooves in our *Kama-Manas*. These are habit-patterns. To fill or erase these is a difficult task calling for painful effort. To check deliberately the normal flow of *Kama-Manasic* activity calls for not only strong resolution but also specific knowledge of the subtle, rationalizing potential of the lower nature. Another factor is that the pain or discomfort aroused by blocking the normal action of *Kama-Manas* is felt immediately, while the pain or discomfort flowing from the effects of selfish thinking is generally not felt until a later date. So we can assume that it is not that people want to indulge in selfish thinking with its unfavourable effects; it simply is that they do not know how to recognize and overcome their rationalizations.

Then, too, there is every encouragement given to self-centred thought today. In the fields of social life, business activity, religious beliefs, etc., people seem to place a premium on pain-producing emotional thinking. No country or race offers any exception. Just as with the individual, so with the nations the effects are cumulative. The world is rapidly approaching the point at which the effects of distorted emotionalized thinking accumulated over many years are about to be released. The extent of these disastrous effects is yet unforeseen, but there are those, no longer blinded by self-interest, who can closely predict the forthcoming dislocations and consequent

readjustments.

The extreme seriousness of the universal practice of thinking emotionally, selfishly, is demonstrated in all its hideousness when we consider the suffering present and impending in world affairs. All confusion and hate, jealousy and strife, are made possible, as we know, only by the terribly selfish nature of the thinking of individuals. If the results of such thinking were to be confined only to the person originating the evil force, it would be bad for him, but not tragic for others. Man, however, is not an isolated being; he has universal ties; his thinking affects family, associates, community, country, race, and finally mankind generally. Further, the stronger and more knowledgeable a person, the wider the effects his thinking produces. So we can see why the control and conversion of *Kama-Manasic* forces and action is of prime importance for the student.

We are "playing for the highest possible stakes." Meanwhile, we have to counteract, in our own nature, strong forces, built and modified over the centuries, the traditions of our society, often the sacrifice of friends. For, when we resolve to practise honesty of purpose and of thought, we become distinct individuals, and, as such, challenge many of our associates, if only by example. This will cause resentment and our popularity rating is apt to fall somewhat. This, however, is only temporary; eventually we shall work through to the more positive aspects of our nature, at which time our company and our services will be in great demand. There are, of course, exceptions to this procedure, but this is the general course which must be pursued. So we have the toilsome work with our own natures, and at the same time have to tackle difficulties originating outside of ourselves. H. P. Blavatsky's statement, "Woe to those who live without suffering," begins to have considerable meaning for the serious student.

The subject will be continued next month.

KNOWLEDGE THAT IS VITAL

Education enthrones skepticism, but imprisons spirituality. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies.

—MAHATMA K.H.

THERE are several branches of knowledge covering the various activities that one may want to pursue. To be a man of the world, one has to be familiar with a type of knowledge which is distinct from that required by the man of science or the man of learning. The composer of music avails himself of that stratum of knowledge which is different from the one drawn upon by the poet or the sculptor. The mathematician and the astronomer, the alchemist and the delver in magic lore have teachings and obey a discipline of which the ordinary person knows nothing and cares even less.

Each of these branches of learning has its utility, but none can take the individual anywhere near his divine source and origin. Not one of these can reveal to him his beginnings or the why of his birth and the whither of his end. Is he projected on to this earth through a chance collision of the atoms? Did a god in a far-off heaven fashion his life of want and failure and misery? Why should lust and greed and anger hold him in bondage and make him do base things seemingly against his will? Is it his destiny that he as a unit should snuff out or be snuffed out by other units in his struggle for existence? Is virtue all that powerful if more often than not it is seen bending its knees to vice? To answer queries and doubts such as these, one needs to imbibe a knowledge which unfortunately is not available in institutes of learning except as a speculative venture into the unknown. The right and logical explanations on the subject of the problems of the great dual principles—right and wrong, good and evil, liberty and despotism, pain and pleasure, egotism and altruism—have to be found, experimented with and applied to life. A knowledge that can furnish answers to such problems is vital, and

before it all other knowledge must appear petty and jejune.

Theosophy teaches that man as we know him has been on earth for 18 million years and a little over. It was in that far-off beginning that the School of Life took on its pupil-souls. But long before the School started, the preparatory work must have gone on—the Teachers must have been assembled and chosen, the Rules and Instructions framed and syllabuses kept ready suited to the various cycles through which humanity had to pass. Since these Teachings are but the formulations of Truth, the Teachers must have been trained in the applications of the Doctrine as also in the art of preserving the Truths across dark ages and periods of obscuration. In historical times, this School worked in secrecy until in the 19th century it broke its silence of centuries in order that its teachings might, if promulgated, induce men and women to a saner way of thought and action.

Blind belief, superstition and creedal fanaticism were separating people from people while the votaries of orthodox religions were fighting those of modern science, pushing people further into the paths of error. To achieve some degree of success in the effort to open their minds to correct perception, they had to be weaned away from superstition, fanaticism and falsehoods. Wrong ideas based on false concepts have been the bane of humanity for centuries. The building up of the gargantuan image of a god made in the likeness of man with all the foibles of man multiplied a hundredfold, was a heinous crime perpetrated against humanity. A god who could be roused to anger and therefore could be appeased by prayers and scarifices (both animal and human) is still believed in by masses of people. The idea of a god—some describe him as a youth seated on a lotus throne, others as indwelling in their images of stone and clay—has to be erased and at the same time replaced by the true concept of an infinite, impersonal and all-pervasive god-principle closer to us than hands and feet, nearer to us than breathing. When the truth of this dawns upon us, we no longer believe that prayers or petitions on bended knees can wipe off the taint of misdeeds or favour us with unmerited boons. No litanies can turn a sleeping fool into an awakened wizard, nor will prostrations and sacrificial rites

bring rains when the monsoon fails.

If there is no God in high heaven, what is there which, being superior to us and all creation, dispenses glory or gloom and holds the balance of justice? The answer is that there is an absolute Law which guides and governs all manifestation. Wherever life manifests and evolution runs its course, there, within that life—be it atom, molecule, moneron or man—resides the Spiritual Essence that some call God and others Law. This law is a conscious living entity. Below the kingdom of man, it gives to nature its laws. In the human kingdom, it takes count of motive and intent. It resides in the hearts of all, and, being conscious and not blind, it can distinguish between the action of the infant and of the idiot on the one hand and the same action done with deliberation by an awakened intellect on the other. What is important to understand is that action anywhere is produced and preceded by internal feeling or emotion, will or volition, and thought or mind. As with the individual, so with the manifested universe. Nature, even in its infinitesimal parts, is a physical something of more or less density which provides an area of experience to that which resides within and supplies the motivating energy. Thus, the Kosmos taken as a vast whole is seen to advantage as variegated shapes and forms of matter used by a vast and numerous host of sentient beings who vary in degrees of consciousness and of intelligence.

For the individual, the judge, jury and executioner are all within. In the ultimate analysis, it is he himself in his inmost essence, and most times unbeknown to the outer personality, who dispenses justice with an impartial hand. He himself is god and man and animal and is subject to the great laws that reign supreme in each domain and part of his being.

In the lower kingdoms, evolution moves its appointed course by natural impulse. There is no deviation from the set programme, for there is no choice. The human being can to some extent interfere with, retard or accelerate this movement and he may people his current in space with elements coloured with his good or evil thoughts and intentions.

It is only in the human being that the power to judge and

discriminate between moral values exists. He can rise to the plane where sit the gods—the *Dhyanis*, the rulers of our earth. He can on the other hand lend the strength of his mind and ideation to the animal within him and so take the road of ignominy and failure. His evolution is thus through self-induced ways and means, checked by Karma. Karma itself is Law—intelligent, conscious, all-pervasive. Its chief function is not punitive, but lies in the restoration of broken harmony. Any action that violates unity or preaches by word and example unbrotherliness in any form, on any plane and through any media, invites its reaction.

Unless the individual acknowledges the existence of Universal Brotherhood, he cannot understand the basis of morality and will not be able to come out from among the vast throng of men and become separate.

THESE exalted beings say that all men are—as a scientific and dynamic fact—united, whether they admit it or not; and that each nation suffers, on the moral as well as the physical plane, from the faults of all other nations, and receives benefit from the others also even against its will. This is due to the existence of an imponderable, tenuous medium which interpenetrates the entire globe, and in which all the acts and thoughts of every man are felt and impressed, to be afterward reflected again. Hence, say the Adepts, the thoughts or the doctrines and beliefs of men are of the highest importance, because those that prevail among people of a low character are just as much and as easily reflected upon the earth as are the thoughts and beliefs of persons occupying a higher plane of culture.

—W. Q. JUDGE

A SOLEMN UNDERTAKING

ONE of the trends of the times is to seek any occasion to make a vow, and often there is a deplorable lack of forethought and earnestness on the part of the vower. Disgruntled workers vow not to return to work till their demands are met. And who has not made New Year's vows—and broken them, in a matter of days if not hours? Some have gone to the extent of vowing to sacrifice their all and to practise austerity in their own lives. But do those who make a vow always understand all that it implies?

A vow or a pledge is more than a resolve. It is born of absolute determination that there shall be no failure. In making a vow we call into play the higher aspect of the will, and this will is the most sacred power in the universe. The breaking of a vow means self-degradation through loss of self-respect.

The "Aphorisms on Karma," which Mr. Judge stated had been given to him by teachers, among them Madame Blavatsky, contain a significant reference to the power of a vow. It may even, we are told, actually change the instrument in use by the Ego so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma. (*U. L. T. Pamphlet No. 21*)

The reference here would seem to be to a solemn undertaking, a promise given by the incarnated consciousness to the Real Man within, and it may be inferred that the breaking of such a vow might well have consequences correspondingly serious. Vows which are self-energized and are made after careful self-examination, when kept as they ought to be, produce an inner change that is of the nature of true conversion—quite different from the effect of outer proselytizing.

Prudence suggests the prior cultivation of the habit of doing meticulously every day what we have agreed to do. It is suggested, in *Letters That Have Helped Me*, as a wise plan to test oneself in silence before pushing one's demands on the Law, to place oneself in the attitude of a disciple and impose the tests oneself. And fortunately life offers us many opportunities in smaller matters to strengthen our sense of responsibility in keeping promises that we have made, however casually, like punctually keeping all

appointments. Many consider these as hardly promises at all, however much the failure to keep them may inconvenience others and waste their time.

The real test comes when the keeping of a vow involves hardships and difficulties. Gandhiji laid the greatest stress on the importance of keeping one's vow, no matter what the difficulties that may present themselves. He believed it to be necessary to keep an oath at any cost, though he recognized an exception if the oath had been mistakenly taken. Among such he might well have included oaths taken with an evil or antisocial intent. He once wrote:

If you weigh a pledge against lakhs of rupees, the weight of the pledge will be greater....He who keeps his honour thus has got everything. Even if he gets the sovereignty of the world but loses his honour, it is as though he gained nothing....Every breach of a pledge or a good resolution is death....It becomes unpardonable suicide when mortal man glories in the breach.

No duty, of course, should be neglected; we have such by natural law and by agreement, and we should faithfully fulfil them *until they leave us*; we must not desert them. By doing our duty by every duty, we work out our Karma fulfilling the Law, and are thus made fit for higher duties. W. Q. J. said, "Duty is the royal talisman; duty, alone, will lead you to the goal." We must place an absolutely firm reliance upon the Law, doing that which is nearest to us first, and then what is farther away. It is not *what* is done, but the *motive in doing it*, that counts; so we have to watch well our motives; if the motive is right, anything we do is right, and every duty is equally great. If the right course is followed, there will be time and occasion for all duties and none will be neglected.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Shimon Peres, former prime minister of Israel and one of the Nobel Peace Prize winners in 1994, views the 21st century as "an invitation to a new era." While the major part of the 20th century was laden with wars and saturated with blood, toward the end of the century "history started its ascent to new horizons," writes Peres. He attributes this to the advance of science and technology, which have changed the way we live. In *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Spring 2000), he has this to say:

It is amply clear by now that once the world moved from an economy of the land to an economy of the mind, armies became obsolete. Wisdom, after all, is not attired in uniforms and technology is not spread by the sound of cannon fire....

Of course, no one can guarantee that there will be no more wars. But it can be said with utmost certainty that wars are no longer necessary. The benefits anticipated from scientific peace exceed by far the profits expected to be gained from costly armies. This is not to speak of the damages of war, which include moral and material damage to the aggressor, not only to the victim. Historically speaking, there are no win-win wars and there is no lose-lose peace....

There is an invitation by history to people that comes not from the side that is lacking, but from the side that is promising; not from the reserves of revolt, but from the potential of growth, from the belief that the day has arrived when it is possible to hope rather than to rebel, to enjoy new expanses, rather than become entrenched in narrow and tortuous paths strewn with setbacks and mines.

We have parted from a century of sorrow, but we part from it without sorrow. Thank goodness it has ended. We have an invitation to a new era.

The coming centuries might restore a little of the taste of the Garden of Eden. This time, we should remain wary of the snake, but still eat, yes, eat, from the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

Can knowledge alone lead humanity's ascent to new horizons? Mere head-learning, with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide

it, is worse than ignorance. Nor is there any hope for humanity until it changes its direction from unbrotherliness, the "insanity of the age," to brotherly co-operation. True ideas are the crying need if this new century is going to prove any better than the previous one. In this *Kali Yuga*, men and women no longer follow their spiritual intuitions. Instead of acting from within, they ever follow impulses from without—those produced by their physical senses and gross selfish body. H.P.B., who could perceive where this would lead man and what future was in store for him, also gave the means to ameliorate it, if it were not possible entirely to avert it:

...the only palliative to the evils of life is union and harmony—a Brotherhood IN ACTU, and *altruism* not simply in name. The suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of bad effects. And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats—still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 644)

As in the realm of science, so in the sphere of religion, adherents of different faiths are turning their thoughts toward the new century and what it holds in store for us. In the Buddhist Publication Society's *Newsletter* (No. 44), Bhikkhu Bodhi ponders the question of what Buddhism can offer the world in the years ahead:

From one angle it could be said that what Buddhism can offer humanity today is exactly what it has been holding out for the past twenty-five centuries: an acute diagnosis of the human condition and a clear path to final liberation from suffering. But while this statement is correct as far as it goes, it is not yet sufficient; for it does not take account of the fact that in any age the aspects of the Dhamma to be emphasized, and the way they are to be expressed, must address the particular problems faced

by the people living in that age....If what the Buddha taught is "only suffering and the cessation of suffering," then the starting point for any convincing presentation of the way to suffering's end must be the specific forms of suffering characteristic of our time.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, two manifestations of suffering have become so prevalent that they seem almost the defining characteristics of the modern era. One is an invidious sense of meaninglessness, feeling of alienation from life, now becoming almost as common in the more modernized quarters of Asia as in the West. The other, most marked in the Third World, is collective violence. The first problem has its locus in the individual consciousness, the second in the relationships among communities at different levels of social order. If the Dhamma is to benefit humanity in the coming years and decades, it must show us a way out of the abyss of meaninglessness and offer guidelines for reducing the frequency and severity of collective violence.

The sense of meaninglessness as a widespread social phenomenon set in with the rise of modern industrial civilization....Our existence did not embody any higher purpose than the brute struggle to survive. The loss of meaning was further aggravated by the breakup of traditional forms of social order under the impact of industrial capitalism. Altruism and restraint were eclipsed by the new creed of self-indulgence, which gave precedence to wealth, power, and conspicuous consumption as the supreme goals of life. Today the sense of meaninglessness has reached a truly global scale....

For those adrift in the sea of meaninglessness, the Buddha's teaching offers a sense of meaning stemming from a profound spiritual tradition that combines metaphysical depth with psychological astuteness and the highest ethical standards. Without calling for blind faith in dogmatic creeds or speculative postulates, the Buddha points directly to the invariable universal laws that underlie happiness and suffering. He insists that we can discover these laws for ourselves, simply by clear reflection on our own immediate experience, and he offers us methods of practice by which we can gradually dig up the buried roots of suffering and cultivate the causes culminating in the highest

happiness....

The second type of suffering that has become so pervasive in our time is social violence, which still wreaks so much misery across the globe.... What is necessary for true peace and harmony to prevail among human beings is not the hammering out of a comprehensive treaty by which the various parties to a conflict compromise their hard and volatile demands. What is truly required is a new mode of perception, the ascent to a universal consciousness that transcends the narrow standpoint of ego-centric or ethnocentric self-interest. This is a consciousness that regards others as not essentially different from oneself, which detaches itself from the insistent voice of self-interest and rises up to a universal perspective from which the welfare of all appears as important as one's own good.

Some researchers believe that body language, or communication through gestures, dates back to a time in humanity's distant past before spoken language came to be used. Even today people use gestures to get a message across, or use them unwittingly as they speak. Recent studies suggest that there might be "a deep evolutionary link between speech and gesture" (*New Scientist*, April 8). Laura Spinney writes about the growing interest in how early humans communicated:

To Michael Corballis from the University of Auckland in New Zealand, our gestures are not only an adjunct to speech. They may have been our earliest method of communication. Early humans communicated using their whole bodies in a form of mime. Speech evolved out of this ancient body language, and gesture is all that remains of it today, he says. Gesture and speech have co-evolved, and the connection is so close that we can't do one without the other....

Corballis doesn't see mime and speech as separate channels, more as a progression of forms.... Gesture once carried the whole linguistic burden. Nothing else, he believes, can explain the huge amount of information that can be conveyed by gesture alone....

Gesture may perform many functions. But if Corballis is right it could help resolve a long-running debate about whether language emerged gradually or all at once, in a "big bang." Some linguists have argued that grammar is not something that could have evolved slowly—you either have it or you don't—and that therefore it must have exploded onto the hominid scene at some point in our history, perhaps with the emergence of *Homo sapiens*.

The earliest races, before the development of *Manas* or mind which turned man into a thinking being, were indeed "dumb," yet could communicate as there is more to communication than words, and many different ways to get a message across, as we notice even among animals and birds. One of the Masters wrote:

Long ages of silence were required, for the evolution and mutual comprehension of speech, from the moans and mutterings of the first remove of man above the highest anthropoid (a race now extinct since "nature shuts the door behind her" as she advances, in more than one sense)—up to the first monosyllable uttering man....

Intellect has an enormous development in this [the 4th] round. The dumb races will acquire *our* human speech, on our globe, on which from the 4th race language is perfected and knowledge in physical things increases.

The Secret Doctrine (II, 198-201) traces the evolution of speech, which developed only after the *manasic* element dormant in primitive man was fructified and awoke to life.

Some psychologists promote the idea that giving vent to one's feelings can prove useful. Thus, if one is angry, he should "let it out" by punching a pillow or slamming a door. But this advice is more harmful than helpful, according to other psychologists.

"Expressing anger actually increases aggression," says Dr. Brad Bushman, Iowa State University psychologist. *Psychology Today* reports the experiments carried out by him and his colleagues. The

subjects who were allowed to give vent to their anger became even more aggressive—"and that's most worrisome," says Bushman.

Instead of trying to simmer down, he suggests, just turn off the heat altogether. "Count to 10—or 100, if need be—and the anger will pass."

Mr. Judge offers sound advice when he says:

Your going into the street and seeing a street brawl creates an impression. Your having a quarrel last week and denouncing a man, or with a woman and getting very angry, creates an impression in you, and that impression is as much subject to cyclic law as the moon, and the stars, and the world, and is far more important in respect to your development—your personal development or evolution—than all these other great things, for they affect you in the mass, whereas these little ones affect you in detail. ("Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*)

Mr. Judge goes on to speak of a friend who was suffering from depression, and the advice he gave him is equally applicable to those prone to anger or other harmful emotions: "Do what the old theosophists taught us; that is, we can only have good results by producing opposite impressions to bad ones." Thus, when a person notices anger arising in him, he should at once implant in himself the opposite impression—that of self-restraint, amiability, charity, love, forbearance, leniency, gentleness, patience. This is the best remedy for changing one's mood and preventing its recurrence.

A problem that is beginning to grow insidiously and alarmingly in India is teenage alcoholism. Society is changing, old taboos are fading, and drinking is no longer regarded as an evil. Doctors and psychologists are now reporting an alarming spiral in the falling age of alcoholics. "True, this is a new age," writes Robin Abreu, Principal Correspondent of *India Today* (April 10), "but when teen drinking increases dropout rates, even crime, and affects family life, it means things are out of control."

"Alcoholism is becoming a lifestyle for teenagers," says De-Addiction Centre psychologist Dr. Achal Bhagat. At Chennai's Apollo Hospitals, Dr. Gopalakrishnan warns that it would be folly to pass it off as mere youthful indiscretion. The problem is much more serious: "alcoholism routinely destroys brain cells," and can even kill.

The malaise [writes Abreu] is rooted in the societal acceptance of alcohol and society's indulgent view towards teenagers knocking down the odd peg....According to studies done by the De-Addiction Centre at AIIMS in Delhi, every fifth teenager in the 15-19 age group in the capital drinks regularly and around three lakh are addicted. Another one lakh, it is estimated, need medical attention for alcohol-related disorders....

To alter established mind-sets, to convince a generation that the buzz that comes with a beer has dangerous implications, requires a mammoth effort. Counsellors stress that parents must start communicating with their children and identify reasons for their stress....Also, a society that merely smirks at underage kids trying to find some machismo in a beer mug needs to understand there's nothing amusing in it. The journey from recreation to addiction, or to death, is not a long one.

Perhaps the best way to control the problem is to educate both youngsters and their parents. Alcoholism, like some other evils, is part of a larger social problem. Mr. Judge suggests "healthy and interesting occupation" as a cure for such a habit. Youngsters, also adults, need recreation centres. Recreation in a wider sense includes a taste for literature, art, music and other healthful creative pursuits which will keep youngsters away in a normal and natural manner from the curse of alcohol.

For alcohol is indeed a curse. Theosophy asserts that apart from its physiological consequences, drinking is still more prejudicial to the moral and spiritual growth of man, "for alcohol in all its forms has a direct, marked, and very deleterious influence on man's psychic condition. Wine and spirit drinking is only less destructive to the development of the inner powers than the habitual use of hashish, opium and similar drugs." (*The Key to Theosophy*)
